# WRITTEN STATEMENT

# BY

# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **TITLE**  | **Wylfa Newydd** |
| **DATE**  | **17 January 2019** |
| **BY** | **Ken Skates AM, Minister for Economy and Transport**  |

This morning we received the news that Hitachi is suspending its operations at Wylfa Newydd. The Welsh Government is deeply concerned at this announcement and my sympathies go to all those who are immediately caught up in these developments. This is not a situation of Welsh Government’s making, but we will do everything we reasonably can to support those affected, including the apprentices and staff, as well as the businesses involved in the supply chain

In my Written Statement of 15 January, I outlined the economic importance of the Wylfa Newydd project to Anglesey, North Wales and the UK. The significance of today’s news cannot therefore be underestimated. It is a huge blow.

As indicated in that Statement, I spoke with the UK Minister for Energy and Industry on 15 January. I also wrote to the Secretary of State for Business, Enterprise and Industrial Strategy and spoke with the Secretary of State for Wales.

We are continuing to seek urgent assurances from the UK Government on this matter. We are seeking guarantees that the UK Government will be doing everything possible to bring this project to Anglesey as well as clarification from the UK Government regarding the funding model which will deliver major infrastructure projects like Wylfa Newydd.We are seeking assurance from the UK Government about the wider implications for the regional economy of North Wales and we are pressing them about how they can support us in areas such as skills and the supply chain. There is huge potential in North Wales for the future development of a vital sector for the UK as a whole, but the UK Government needs to step up to the plate.

Wylfa Newydd is the biggest economic development project in Wales for decades, capable of delivering significant long term economic benefits. The critical mass of home-grown Welsh and UK capability within the Horizon Nuclear Power organisation is vital to see this project through.

My immediate priority is to determine what today’s announcement means in reality. It is hugely important that the momentum of the work can be maintained, not least with the Development Consent Order and other statutory processes.

In his Statement today, the Secretary of State for Business, Enterprise and Industrial Strategy stated that the basis of the Nuclear Sector Deal still stands. Whilst this is welcomed, this does leave a number of very significant questions for the island of Anglesey, North Wales and Wales as a whole.

Today, I met the Leader of Ynys Môn County Council. I'll be attending an emergency meeting of the Economic Ambition Board on Monday. I am also in close dialogue with Horizon Nuclear Power. We have been working closely together over a number of years on this project and this partnership will continue.

Together, we will continue to put pressure on the UK Government to move things forward. This project must continue, so as to deliver a lasting legacy for Anglesey, North Wales and the UK.

This is clearly a very fast moving process and my officials are assessing the details as they emerge. In its statement today, Hitachi stated that its decision was made from the viewpoint of Hitachi’s economic rationality as a private enterprise. We will be seeking a clearer view from Hitachi over the coming days on this matter, as well as from the UK Government in respect of next steps.

I will continue to keep Members updated as matters progress.